MEMOIRS AND LETTERS OF JAMES KENT. By his great-grandson, WILLIAM KENT of the New York Bar. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1898.

Talleyrand's scornful adage about letter writers, which Kent must have heard—for he let wonderfully little pass him of what was printed in French or English—should have held him closer to his lectures and commentaries. Crabbedly conservative and disliked, therefore, by the growing nation, he became embittered, and in his later correspondence scored others for a biased egotism that he himself betrayed. Although chilled by this trait, we find much to atone for it in the loving dread he showed for his country's happiness. He believed John Adams hopeful of setting up an hereditary monarchy, and he looked askant at J. Q. Adams' election.

The book is enlivened by such glimpses into his private views. The biographer, being a great-grandson, has been able happily to relieve the otherwise stern countenance with kindly and even humorous lines, and to soften the cold, judicial gaze with indications of a love for the Muses. Anecdotes of his meetings with the foremost statesmen and writers help prove that all saw in him the framer of our legal policy. As chancellor, during the nine years ending in 1823, he had not a single decision, opinion or dictum of his predecessors from 1777 onwards even suggested to him, which, he said, "gave me grand scope; and I took the court as if it had never been known in the United States."

In 1781 he left Yale College, its professor and its three tutors; its lessons he never forsook. More stress, indeed, is laid on his classical than on his legal lore. It would amuse modern business-like lawyers to find a judge's journal teeming with such entries as, "Pinkney's speech in the Nereide case ranks with Cicero's best." This notion of Kent's was quite odd in one who had listened to so many orators of note at his own bar. Again he states, "Mrs. Radcliffe's productions and the keen observations of my wife make me bow to the equal talents and genius of female minds." On the same page we read that "Twelfth Night" and several others of Shakespeare's plays are "very indifferent" or "barely tolerable!" "Hamilton, had he lived, would have rivalled Socrates!" This last we can forgive, in view of his friendship with that lofty spirit. His account of Hamilton forms a valuable appendix to the book, revealing the simple, old-fashioned patriotism which pervaded both men, and was, perhaps, their chief bond of union.

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THE AMERICAN LAW OF REAL PROPERTY, By CHRISTOPHER G. TIEDEMAN. Second Edition. St. Louis: The F. H. Thomas Law Book Co. 1892.

In the preface to the first edition of this book, the author states that one of his objects in writing it was to show a logical or historical reason for every principle of the law of Real Property.

It is not necessary to state that this commendable and difficult task has been successfully completed, for all who have read the book will testify to its clear and comprehensive statement, and logical and rational treatment of the subject. In this, the second edition, valuable revisions and additions have been made, including practically all the cases decided by the American courts of last resort in the intervening years, in relation to the limitations of estates by deed, or by will, and the rights of parties therein ; and the leading cases on other branches of the subject.

The author has, unfortunately, appended no table of English Statutes such as Mr. Washburn included in the index to his work ; and has failed to arrange the cases in his voluminous notes in the alphabetical order of their states. In discussing the subject of estates-tail, Pennsylvania is omitted from the list of states which have converted such estates into fee-simple or otherwise modified the common-law rule ; and included among those which have "not expressly abolished" them ; yet the Act of April 27, 1855, provides that thereafter such estates shall be construed as fee-simple. And no mention whatever is made of the subject of ground-rents, which surely deserves some notice.

On the whole, however, the treatment of topics is comprehensive and accurate, considering that the author does not profess to enter into "all the ramifications of the subject," but merely to give an elementary text-book and book of reference. Especially valuable are the chapters on Mortgages, Uses and Trusts, Title by Deed, and by Devise. *M. H.*

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THE SCIENCE OF LAW AND LAWMAKING. By R. FLOYD CLARKE, A. B., LL. B., of the New York Bar. New York City: The Macmillan Co.

The importance of the question considered by the author, and the growing interest in it, insure something more than passing attention to the book under review. Codification, with its advantages and drawbacks, and a theory for the solution of the problem, are presented in a manner intended by the writer to be equally intelligible to the lawyer and the layman. Whether the layman, however intelligent, will find the subject sufficiently accessible to be enlightened, is a question that can be answered after experiment only. It may be pointed out that so much digression is rendered necessary by the terminology that the legal reader, perhaps, feels hampered. Thus, a code is defined to be a statute of a certain kind. This necessitates definition of a statute, *i. e.*, a law enacted, etc. Then law is defined and cases cited which involve the interpretation of such hieroglyphics as 1 Stra. 504; 4 L. J. R. N. S., etc. The writer, however, has wisely made reference to the reports unnecessary by frequently setting out at large the facts of the cases. After a historical *resumè*, and the statement of the case *pro* and *con*, codification is introduced. The method of adducing concrete